

Iowa Outdoors
Iowa Department of Natural Resources
www.iowadnr.com

Editor: Mick Klemesrud, 515/281-8653
mick.klemesrud@dnr.state.ia.us

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RESEARCH PROJECT FOCUSES ON BOBCATS IN SOUTHERN IOWA

CHARITON – The Iowa Department of Natural Resources and Iowa State University have joined together in a three year research project to learn more about bobcat populations and where the animals are located in an eight county area in south central Iowa.

Todd Gosselink, forest wildlife research biologist with the DNR, said hunters, trappers and the general public are an important ingredient in this project.

“The general public can help us by recording bobcat sightings and by letting us know when they have accidentally caught a bobcat in a trap,” Gosselink said. The DNR will also be collecting bobcats killed on Iowa roadways.

There are four public meetings to discuss the research project. Bobcat ecology and the public’s involvement in the study will be discussed at the meetings. The meetings are Oct. 7, at the Warren County Conservation Board’s Annett Nature Center, 1555 188th Ave., Indianola; Oct. 9, at the Weldon Community Center, Hwy. J12, Weldon; Oct. 14, at the Lucas County Conservation Board’s Pin Oak Lodge Nature Center, 54996 Hwy. 14, Chariton; and Oct. 16, at the Appanoose County Conservation Board’s Center 2000 Nature Center, 25100 520th St., Centerville. All meetings begin at 7 p.m.

The DNR will be tagging live bobcats with radio collars in Marion, Warren, Clarke, Lucas, Monroe Decatur, Wayne and Appanoose counties.

For more information, contact Gosselink at 641-774-2958.

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BECOMING OUTDOOR WOMEN

By Joe Wilkinson

Iowa Department of Natural Resources

The heavy flintlock rifle seemed nearly as big as she was. Paula Mullin steadied the barrel against a post. Squeezing the trigger, she waited for the kick. She waited a little longer. It came, along with the blast and flash of flame. She had held the bulky firearm steady, however, waiting out the hangfire. “That’s a hard thing, with a flintlock,” offered instructor Mark Wagner. “Usually, it will go right off. Sometimes, if the flint gets dull or there is a little fouling in the lock mechanism, there will be a hangfire.”

Not just another day in class, or at the office, for Mullin and 80-plus other women at the Springbrook Education Center, near Guthrie Center, this month. But that is why they had traded phones, homes and families for the outdoors at this *Becoming an Outdoor Woman* (BOW) workshop. “I’ve been interested in the outdoors since I was a little girl,” explained Mullin, from Goose Lake and a University of Iowa student. She read about the weekend retreat in the Iowa Conservationist. “Once I mentioned it, it turned out I knew a few people that had been here. They said it was interesting, a good time. So I came.”

Each woman—and they ranged from their early 20s into their 60s—selected from 25 outdoor topics over four sessions. Each runs about three hours, providing background and instruction, but leaving plenty of time for ‘hands on’ experience. The favorites? “Maybe the outboard motor boats and backing the trailers,” chose Nancy Giesking of North Liberty. “I learned lots of stuff about digital cameras in nature photography. I was stumbling with electronics.”

Besides guiding women past barriers in what might be considered male-dominated territory, BOW gets them a step ahead in the cutting-edge stuff. “In the GPS (global positioning system) session, we played a game called ‘Geo-Caching Treasure Hunt’,” relayed Giesking. “You learn where certain ‘trinkets’ are hidden, by finding them on computer. Then, you get the coordinates and go out in the woods and find them.” She says that has already come in handy back home, as she comes across virtual hunts on the Internet. Giesking also appreciated the air-conditioned dorms and cafeteria meals. “You don’t feel obligated (to do all the work). That leaves you free to go to the classes.”

The women of BOW range from outdoor novices to multi-year returnees. Each pays \$135 for the Friday afternoon through Sunday noon course. Dana Pinkelman was a first timer this month. Her mother missed *this* one, but has been to seven sessions over the years. “She talked me into it. It was not a tough sell,” confided Pinkelman, of

Council Bluffs. Her priority for the weekend was to learn to drive...backwards. "I haven't ever backed a trailer in (to the water) before. I had to take this course before I was allowed to back our jet ski in. I did great," she laughed.

The 30 instructors include conservation officers and biologists and volunteers, proficient in their outdoor fields. Many are women, but men are on hand, too. Several husband-wife teaching couples share duties. "The instructors make it clear what they want everyone to do, yet they are not talking down to me," assessed Giesking.

On the muzzleloader range, for instance, instructor Mark Wagner insisted on safety. That's why Mullin held on to her shot, when it did not fire immediately. "I thought it was going to be a lot harder. He made it pretty straightforward," she offered. "I have a neighbor who has a muzzleloader and he told me I can use it. I'm pretty excited now."

"We went through development, history, artistry of the muzzleloader," explained Wagner. "When we got down to the shooting range, it was 'hands on'; actually loading and firing themselves. Once they started shooting at targets, it was very natural. Some of them did quite well."

Some classes are yearly standards. Others are seasonal; ice fishing in the winter; boating in warm weather. Some teach 'specialties'; fly casting, dog sledding. All of them, though, subtract a little of the mystery from, and inject a little more involvement in, a wide world underutilized by half of our population.

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STATE PRESERVES BOARD TO MEET OCT. 4 NEAR CHEROKEE

CHEROKEE – The State Preserves Advisory Board of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources will meet at 8:30 a.m., Oct. 4, at the Cherokee County Conservation Board office, near Cherokee. Board members are meeting at 1 p.m., Oct. 3, for a tour of Steele Prairie. Steele Prairie is located 1 mile north, and 2.5 miles west of Larrabee.

Members of the State Preserves Advisory Board are Neil Bernstein, Robin Fortney, Kathy Gourley, Laura Jackson, Scott Moats and Tim Sproul. The DNR Director is Jeffrey Vonk.

A more detailed agenda is available on the Iowa DNR's website www.iowadnr.com under the State Preserves Advisory Board link on the front page.

The following is the meeting agenda.

- Approve Agenda
- Approve Minutes of July Meeting

- Steele Prairie Discussion
- Preserve Nomination Updates
 - Banister-McGregor Woods
 - Hartman Bluff
 - Glenwood Resource Center
 - Coralville Sites
 - DeLong Savanna
 - Baylor Prairie
 - Slayton Round Barn
- Proposal by Linn County for Mediation of Highway 100 Issue
- Scenic Preserve Criteria Study
- Starr's Cave State Preserve
- Friends of the Preserves
- *Iowa Conservationist* Articles for Preserves
- Open Discussion
- Schedule Meetings for 2004

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GRANTS AVAILABLE TO RURAL FIRE DEPARTMENTS

AMES – The Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has grant money available for Iowa's rural fire departments to help with equipment in battling wildfires. The grants offer funding assistance for wildfire equipment, personal protective equipment, money for new dry hydrants and for community outreach programs.

Gail Kantak, fire supervisor with the DNR's forestry bureau, said fire departments will receive information about the grants soon and she is encouraging them to return a National Volunteer Fire Department Survey. Departments returning the survey by Dec. 15 can receive priority points for the Volunteer Fire Assistance grant application.

"It is important for rural fire departments to return the national survey so we can assess the needs and capabilities of our rural fire departments," she said. The survey results will be compiled in a report to Congress.

The grants package, being mailed to each Iowa rural fire department, include:

A safety poster "**Wildfires – Different Rules • Different Tools.**"

Volunteer Fire Assistance Application: 50-50 cost share grants for wildfire equipment with a maximum grant of \$3,500 per department. Applications are due Dec. 15.

Big Rivers Forest Fire Management Compact: A 50-50 cost share for personal protective equipment. The cost share for Iowa is limited and available on a first come, first served basis. Contact Gail Kantak at 515-233-1161 for funding availability.

Dry Hydrant Grant Application: A 50-50 cost share program to establish new dry hydrants. The maximum cost share is \$2,000 per dry hydrant. Applications are due by Dec. 15.

National Volunteer Fire Department Survey: In coordination with the National Fire Plan and in an effort to assess the needs and capabilities of the nation's rural fire departments, the National Association of State Foresters have asked each state to compile information about the nation's rural fire departments. The information is compiled and reported to Congress. The survey is due by Jan. 15, 2004. Departments who return a completed survey by Dec. 15 with their Volunteer Fire Assistance Application will receive priority points.

Iowa DNR Forestry Bureau Fire Program Opportunities: Outlines the programming opportunities available to Iowa's fire suppression agencies by the Iowa DNR forestry bureau in cooperation with federal, state and local partners.

For more information, contact Kantak at 515-233-1161.

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IOWA FISHING REPORT

For the week of September 30, 2003

www.iowadnr.com

This is the FINAL Iowa Fishing Report until ice conditions are present and can support fishing activity. For current information on fishing conditions for your lake or area, contact the office in that district. Phone numbers are listed with each district report.

Southeast

Lake Darling (Washington): Catfish are still cruising the area around the campground. Cooler weather forecasted this week should bring in the crappies and bass to feed on the young bluegills and green sunfish.

Lake Odessa (Louisa): Levee work is mostly finished. The Toolesboro road will be open full time now. With the lower temperatures forecasted for this week the fish should start to move into Sand Run and the deeper areas of the lake to over winter.

Lake Geode (Henry): Crappies and bluegills are out in about 8 feet of water just above the weed beds. Bluegills are more than happy to hit a slow sinking jig tipped with a worm. Try darker colors for the best bet. For the crappies use the same thing or tip the

jig with a minnow. You may notice a few fish jumping out of the water away from the shore; these are yellow bass chasing small fish. Try casting a small spoon with lots of flash into these feeding fish for a nice batch of eight to 10-inch yellows.

Lake Rathbun (Appanoose): Crappies have been hitting on minnows.

Lake Sugema (Van Buren): Largemouth bass continue to bite on a variety of artificial lures. Bluegills have been hitting on small jigs. Crappies have been hitting on minnows.

Lake Miami (Monroe): Crappies have been hitting on jig and minnow combinations. Bluegills have been biting on small jigs.

Lake Wapello (Davis): Bluegills have been hitting on small jigs fished along the weed line. Largemouth bass have been hitting on artificial lures. Bullheads have been hitting on chunks of night crawlers.

Coralville Reservoir (Johnson): Catfishing has been slow throughout the reservoir a few fish are being caught around deeper brush piles and drop-offs around the rock walls. The boat ramp in Lake Macbride State Park will be closed Sept. 30 through Oct. 20 due to asphalt work on the parking lot.

Lake Macbride (Johnson): Crappie fishing is fair throughout the lake using jigs and minnows on deeper brush piles. Fish up to 9-inches are available. Anglers are catching a few walleye off of the rock reefs.

Diamond Lake (Poweshiek): Crappie and bluegill fishing has been good on the brush piles. A few redear sunfish and catfish are also being caught. Anglers are reminded that minnows are not allowed in Diamond Lake.

Union Grove Lake (Tama): Crappie fishing has been good around brush throughout the lake. Most of the fish are around 8 inches with some larger crappie available. Catfishing has been fair on various baits.

Lake Iowa (Iowa): Catfishing has been good on chicken liver and night crawlers. Bluegill and crappie fishing has been fair.

Cedar River (Linn and Cedar): Catfishing has been good to fair on prepared baits and night crawlers. Crappie fishing has been good in the backwater areas throughout the river.

Wapsipinicon River (Jones and Linn): Fishing has been fair for walleye and smallmouth bass on artificial baits and jigs. Catfish are biting on dip baits and night crawlers.

For more information on fishing in southeast Iowa, call the regional office in Brighton at 319-694-2430.

Northeast

Mississippi River Pools 9 to 15: The Mississippi River water levels are expected to stay steady this week, but they are very low. Water is clear and the temperature is 56 degrees. Use caution navigating on the Mississippi right now, as many stumps and rock piles are present throughout the river. Catfishing in **Pools 12-14** has been good on cheese baits, worms and cut baits. Bigger channel catfish are being caught on cut shad fished around the deeper wing dams. Freshwater drum (sheepshead) fishing is excellent in **Pools 9-11**. Drum numbers are sky high in the river and can easily be caught using a sliding egg sinker and a hook baited with worms or crayfish. Drum are a great fish for getting kids in on some action. Largemouth bass fishing has been good in **Pools 9-14**.

These fish have been caught in very good numbers throughout the year and are generally found in the backwater lakes, but since water levels are so low, they are being caught in flowing sloughs and channels. A variety of lures will work, but the traditional jigs, twisters, spinner and crankbaits fished along woody structure in the early morning or late evening hours work best. Some smallmouth are being caught in **Pools 12-14**. White bass are starting to school up right now and action can be very fast. Watch for white bass schools feeding on minnows. If you see areas where minnows are being chased and some are jumping out of the water, try to maintain some distance away from the melee to avoid spooking the white bass. Any lure with flash-such as a spoon or spinner-will work. Make long casts into the areas where the minnows have been breaking the water. White bass can be found anywhere throughout a pool, but areas close to **Lock-and-Dams 9 and 10** are best. Walleye and sauger fishing has been slow on the wing dams in **Pools 12-15** using crankbaits or night crawlers. Bluegill fishing is good in **Pools 12-14** along the shore and brush piles-move to find fish. Crappies are being taken in the deeper sloughs around brush piles. Many anglers are using 'crappie rigs' with minnows for bait. In **Pool 9**, try Minnesota Slough. In **Pool 10**, Harpers Slough is a good location and Cassville Slough in **Pool 11** generally holds good numbers of crappies. Fish minnows in the running sloughs in and around the Sabula Lakes in **Pool 13** for crappies in 4 to 6 feet of water.

Cedar River (Mitchell and Floyd): Walleye fishing is picking up on jigs tipped with a night crawler. Crappies are being caught on small jigs and minnows.

Cedar (Bremer and Black Hawk) and **Shell Rock rivers** (Butler and Bremer): Fishing is good for walleyes using jigs tipped with a night crawler. Smallmouth bass fishing is good on crawdad-colored crankbaits.

Maquoketa (Delaware) and **Wapsipicon rivers** (Buchanan): Smallmouth bass fishing is good using crawdad-colored crankbaits. Walleye fishing is good on jigs tipped with a night crawler.

Lake Delhi (Delaware): Bluegill and crappie fishing is good using a piece of worm or a jig tipped with a minnow.

Volga Lake (Fayette): Crappie fishing is good along brush piles using small jigs and/or minnows.

Lake Hendricks (Howard): Crappie and bluegill fishing is good drifting a small piece of night crawler or a jig tipped with a minnow across the lake.

Trout fishing and stream conditions are excellent! For current trout stocking information, contact the Big Spring Hatchery at 563-245-1699, Decorah Hatchery at 563-382-3315 or Manchester Hatchery at 563-927-5736. You can also view the trout stocking calendar on-line by going to www.iowadnr.com, clicking on Fish and Fishing and then choosing Favorite Pages.

For information on fishing in northeast Iowa, call the regional office in Manchester at 563-927-3276.

Northwest

Spirit Lake (Dickinson): Walleye fishing continues to improve with anglers using crankbaits in the basin of the lake. A few fish in the 26 to 29-inch range were released last week. Try fishing the Stoney Point areas and the footbridge. Yellow perch fishing is spotty with a lot of 9-inch fish and a few 10 to 11-inchers mixed in. Perch are

being caught on Big Stoney, Little Stoney and Red Nose Point in 16 to 18 feet of water. Some weed beds in 10 to 12 feet are also producing perch along with the occasional bluegill and crappie. There is some crappie activity off the weed edges on Reeds Run. Smallmouth bass fishing is also good with the best fishing occurring in the morning. Jigs with plastic trailers are catching good numbers of fish where the rock piles meet the weeds.

West Okoboji (Dickinson): Bluegill fishing has been good, especially off the deep weed edges. Anglers are also finding bluegills suspended off steep drop-offs. Light line and ice jigs tipped with wigglers or wax worms work well. Miller's Bay is a good area for bluegills. Anglers are catching some crappies and perch on the weed edges too.

East Okoboji (Dickinson): Anglers fishing walleyes in East are using shallow running crankbaits over the weed lines, and deep diving crankbaits in deeper water. Yellow perch are being caught at the north end of the lake, by the marinas and the trestle using a little jig tipped with a worm. The best action is in the evenings. Some white bass are still being caught. The best approach is to use small, white spinner baits. The best location is the north end by the Hatchery in the evenings.

Clear Lake (Cerro Gordo): Yellow bass fishing is excellent. Yellows are being caught around the rock reefs, drifting the north shore and off some of the public docks. Use minnows and cut bait for the best yellow bass action. Try different spots until locating a school of fish.

For more information on fishing in northwest Iowa, call the regional office in Spirit Lake at 712-336-1840.

Southwest

Little River (Decatur): Crappies are being caught in the trees.

Slip Bluff (Decatur): Bluegills are being caught along the dam.

Badger Creek (Madison): Anglers are catching crappies and largemouth bass in the tree stumps.

Fogle Lake (Ringgold): Crappies can be caught in the trees along the creek channel.

Three Mile (Union): Crappies are being caught in the trees at the upper end of the lake.

Twelve Mile (Union): Channel catfish fishing is fair on cut bait and liver.

Green Valley (Union): Anglers can find crappies in the trees and around stake beds.

Viking (Montgomery): Crappie fishing is fair using tube jigs tipped with a minnow or minnows suspended from a bobber around brush piles or suspended in 8 to 10 feet of water. Catfish fishing has been good on liver. Bluegills are fair with jigs and night crawlers.

Cold Springs (Cass): Channel catfish are fair on liver and prepared baits, especially toward evening.

Greenfield (Adair): Fishing is fair for channel catfish in the early morning and evening hours using liver. Bluegill and crappie are being caught around brush piles using jigs tipped with a minnow or worm.

Nodaway (Adair): Fishing is fair for channel catfish in the early morning and evening hours using liver.

Mormon Trail (Adair): Channel catfish are fair in the early morning and evening hours using liver. Largemouth bass fishing is fair.

Prairie Rose (Shelby): Fishing is fair for 8-inch crappies on jigs/minnows around brush piles. Channel catfish are good on liver or prepared baits. Largemouth bass fishing is good.

Big Creek Lake (Polk): Bluegill and crappie fishing has been good using traditional baits with the onset of cooler weather. Largemouth bass and walleye fishing has been fair to good with the majority of fish caught are below legal length limits.

Beaver Lake (Dallas): Bluegill fishing is fair using small jigs/worms and bobbers. Largemouth bass fishing has been good, primarily for smaller fish.

Don Williams (Boone): Crappie fishing is fair using minnows. Largemouth bass fishing has improved with the cooler weather.

Lake Ahquabi (Warren): Bluegill and redear fishing has been good using night crawlers and wax worms. Largemouth bass – primarily sub-legal sized fish – are being caught on crankbaits.

Hooper Lake (Warren): Channel catfish fishing has been good early and late using stink baits and chicken liver. Bluegills are being caught using traditional baits and lures. Largemouth bass fishing is fair using crankbaits, although as in Lake Ahquabi, most fish are sub-legal.

Rock Creek (Jasper): Largemouth bass fishing has been fair to good using ‘worms’ and various rigs. Channel catfish fishing has been fair using night crawlers. Crappie fishing has been fair for boat anglers in deeper water using jigs and minnows.

Easter Lake (Polk): Crappie fishing has been fair, with some fish caught using jigs and minnows and/or worms. Largemouth bass fishing has been fair, with some fish taken along the rocky areas. Some channel catfish have been caught using traditional baits.

Hickory Grove Lake (Story): Crappie fishing is good using various small jigs. Bluegill fishing is good using small hooks and tipped with worms. Largemouth bass fishing has been good with most anglers using top-water lures.

Saylorville Lake (Polk): White bass/wiper fishing has been fair using crankbaits and shad raps. Channel catfish fishing has remained fair in the reservoir using stink baits, cut baits and night crawlers. **Tailwater:** Channel catfish and walleye have been fair, with most fish caught early and late.

Lake Red Rock (Marion): White bass/wipers have been fair in the larger bays (Whitebreast), the marina area and areas along the dam. Crappie fishing has been spotty, although some anglers are reporting good fishing once the fish are located. Channel catfish fishing has been good along shorelines using stink baits, cut baits and night crawlers. **Tailwater:** Crappie and walleye fishing has improved using jigs and minnows.

For more information on fishing in southwest Iowa, call the regional office in Lewis at 712-769-2587.

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